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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic
objectives and action in critical areas of concern and
further actions and initiatives**

Statement submitted by Women in Alternative Action, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Facing certain obstacles to the development of Cameroon, the Government of Cameroon is attempting to eliminate a number of hazards. At the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Cameroon underscored efforts undertaken by the Government in health care and primary school education for all, in addition to the vocational training programme in computer science and agriculture established by the Ministry for Women and the Family.

The incidence of violence against women and girls in Cameroon continues to grow day by day. Maternal and child mortality rates are particularly high due to the lack of a social programme for caring for vulnerable women after they give birth. Large numbers of girls and women are deprived of an adequate primary education. This situation is leading Cameroon to the edge of an abyss.

Source of conflict

Cameroon is a democracy encompassing more than 250 ethnic groups, some of which engage in harmful traditional and religious practices that are placed above the laws of the country. In Cameroon, many girls under 18 years of age get married officially, even though it is against the law.

Recommendation

Women in Alternative Action urges Member States, above all in sub-Saharan Africa, to amend the harmful traditional and religious practices and abide by international standards. We have begun interceding with the Government of Cameroon to stop such practices and to amend the Family Code. We ask donors and creditors of good faith and the specialized agencies of the United Nations to assist us with this work by providing technical support.

Women in Alternative Action calls upon the international community to help monitor the mechanisms implemented by African Member States and to encourage civil society to become involved in improving living conditions for the people of all the Central African countries and especially our country, Cameroon.
